

observe this tribute, and have joined us here in the gallery.

New Light Beulah Baptist Church grew out of Beulah Baptist Church, which was a place of worship for Whites and African Americans. In December of 1867, several years after the effective date of the Emancipation Proclamation, many newly freed slaves began exercising their new-found freedoms by taking control of their own affairs. Consequently, the 565 African-American members of the congregation began worshipping on alternating Sundays from the 11 White members of Beulah Baptist Church.

In 1870, after the dispersal of the White congregation, the African-American members of Beulah Baptist Church further asserted their independence by renaming the church New Light Beulah Baptist Church.

After a number of disputes over the church's land, the congregation decided to build a brush arbor on the land of Deacon Pharaoh Smith, a revered leader within the church. Over the following years, this humble brush arbor evolved into the thriving spiritual center that New Light Beulah Baptist Church has become today.

New Light Beulah Baptist Church embodies the resilience and service of the African-American community. Forged from adversity, this congregation has stood strong throughout tumultuous times, both externally and internally. Their strength comes not from the brick and mortar within which they worship, but from God's good graces and the steadfast individuals who have labored in this historic church.

The church has been a leader in Hopkins, South Carolina, a small rural community southeast of Columbia, the State's capital. Through various community-oriented initiatives, such as their child development program, Meals on Wheels, the Neighboring Christian Athletic Association, and the Educational Society, the congregation has positively impacted the entire community.

Next month, New Light Beulah Baptist Church will become the first African-American church in the Hopkins community to be registered as a historic place by the South Carolina Department of Archives and History. I congratulate them on this special recognition.

Mr. Speaker, it is my great honor to represent this fine congregation in this august body. I ask my colleagues in the United States House of Representatives to join me in congratulating New Light Beulah Baptist Church on their 150th anniversary and wishing them continued prosperity in the days ahead.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair would remind Members that it is not in order to refer to occupants of the gallery.

FIGHTING ONLINE SEX TRAFFICKING

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Missouri (Mrs. WAGNER) for 5 minutes.

Mrs. WAGNER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to call on the U.S. House of Representatives to bring my bipartisan Allow States and Victims to Fight Online Sex Trafficking Act to the floor.

Yesterday, The Washington Post revealed that backpage.com hired a contractor to solicit and create illegal sex trafficking ads. This confirms yet again what we have long known about Backpage: it is an online slave market that actively sells America's innocent women and children for sex.

If a business in America held a slave auction, it is impossible for me to imagine that the auctioneer would be able to carry on with impunity. After all, we amended the U.S. Constitution to ban slavery of all forms in the United States many years ago. But this is exactly what is happening with backpage.com. Backpage is selling our children into sex slavery, and we must hold them accountable.

Backpage and other online slave markets can sell America's children over and over again because courts have misinterpreted section 230 of the Communications Decency Act to shield websites from criminal liability for the sex trafficking advertisements that they facilitate.

But the Communications Decency Act, passed over 20 years ago, was never intended to create a lawless internet where people can commit sex crimes online that they cannot commit offline. In fact, this misinterpretation of the CDA is the height of irony.

Speaking in favor of the CDA in 1995, then-Senator Exon said: "The information superhighway should not become a red-light district. Once this bill passes, our children and families will be better protected from those who would electronically cruise the digital world to engage children in inappropriate communications and introductions."

How sad his words ring today. The CDA, meant originally to protect children, has become now a safe harbor for America's pimps. The tech industry is rallying against any changes to the CDA, but freedom of speech online and the enforcement of the Nation's sex trafficking laws are in no way mutually exclusive. Sex trafficking is not a prerequisite of the free and open internet.

Last year, in *Jane Doe v. Backpage*, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the First Circuit made clear that legislation is the only remedy to any conflict between the CDA and America's sex trafficking laws.

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In other words, Congress must clarify to the courts that the Communications Decency Act does not protect sex trafficking, and that is precisely what the Allow States and Victims to Fight Online Sex Trafficking Act will do.

We must bring this legislation to the floor and take a stand for victims across the country. We cannot claim to be antitrafficking advocates, then close our eyes and give a free pass to the websites that sell our children.

HONORING FIRST RESPONDERS OF ARIZONA'S SECOND CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Arizona (Ms. MCSALLY) for 5 minutes.

Ms. MCSALLY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the outstanding individuals in my congressional district who I was proud to award as First Responders of Distinction earlier this week.

We all benefit from the sacrificial work of our first responders, whether we have personally experienced it as they responded to our emergency or whether we indirectly benefit from it by enjoying the safety that they provide.

The everyday acts of heroism by first responders in our community often go uncelebrated. They keep our streets safe, put their lives on the line during emergencies, provide assistance whenever needed, and save lives.

Above and beyond even that standard of greatness, there are outstanding first responders in my district who serve southern Arizona in truly extraordinary ways. These individuals organize community races, develop emergency preparedness training, log hundreds of volunteer hours, launch public education campaigns, and provide meals for disabled seniors.

That is why I created the First Responders of Distinction Award to shine a spotlight on individuals who make extraordinary contributions in our community.

This year, we reached a significant number of nominations, and I was pleased to recognize each one for the role they play. Our winner in the individual category goes to Lieutenant Mertie Stompro, who has served in the Sierra Vista Police Department for 20 years. His many leadership roles include team leader for the Sierra Vista Police Department Tactical Unit and founding member of the Sierra Vista Police Department's Special Response Team.

Mertie distinguished himself as the sergeant overseeing firearms training for the department. He developed force-on-force training to simulate real-life scenarios that officers face in the community. His steadfast approach to challenging officers in the training environment has greatly improved the skill level and preparedness of all ranks in the Sierra Vista Police Department.

In his spare time, Lieutenant Stompro has coordinated an annual Foot Pursuit 5K. It is a race that has become the largest organized race in the Sierra Vista area and fosters positive interaction between law enforcement and the community.